

CSCE NEWS RELEASE

Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe

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Helsinki Commission Co-Chairs Call for Calm and Reason in Albania on Election Day

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Washington, DC—Today, Chairman Sen. Alfonse D'Amato (R-C-NY) and Co-Chairman Rep. Christopher H. Smith (R-NJ) issued the following statement concerning the June 29 parliamentary elections in Albania:

“As Co-Chairmen of the Helsinki Commission, we call upon all citizens of Albania to refrain from violence on election day, to participate in the elections, and to cooperate with election officials, international election observers and peacekeeping forces. We call upon all parties to respect the election results. Finally, we ask the international community to provide continuing support as Albania takes this next step out of its crisis. We extend to the Albanian people, their leaders, and the international representatives our best wishes for a successful election day.

“We know that it is possible for Albania to overcome this crisis and express the will of the people at the ballot box. Events in Albania over the last seven years are indicative of the Albanian people's strong desire for human rights, democracy, free enterprise, and the benefits of integration into Europe and participation in world affairs. We are counting on that strong desire to move Albania forward again.”

On Sunday, June 29, Albania will hold parliamentary elections, which are needed to form a new government with the popular support requisite to lead Albania out of its crisis. This crisis was triggered

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The Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe by law monitors and encourages progress in implementing the provisions of the Helsinki Accords. The Commission, created in 1976, is made up of nine Senators, nine Representatives and one official each from the Departments of State, Commerce and Defense. For more information about the Commission, please call (202) 225-1901.

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by the collapse of fraudulent pyramid schemes in which most Albanians invested, often costing their life savings. Continuing failure to establish control over the country raises doubts about Albania's ability to hold a credible election. Protests, rebellion, and ongoing criminal activities have killed hundreds. Lawlessness reigns in many locations, especially in the south. This election is Albania's opportunity to regain control over its future.